

REMARKS

The Final Office Action dated August 24, 2010 has been carefully considered. Claim 1 has been amended. Claim 1 is in this application.

The previously presented claim was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,368,015 to Wilk. Applicant submits that the teaching of this reference does not teach or suggest the invention defined by the present claim.

The Examiner indicated that the analogous computer/switching circuit (326, Fig. 10A) of Wilk would anticipate a manipulator on the proximal end of the support unit for controlling the active actuator according to electric signals. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Applicant submits that the computer switching system of Wilk is operatively connected to inputs of cameras 312 and 314 for providing imaging circuitry. However, Wilk does not teach or suggest that the computer switching system is used for automatically adjusting the spacing between the left and right cameras under operation of the actuator. To the contrary, in Wilk any adjustment of the spacing between the left and right camera elements is performed manually. Specifically, Wilk discloses trocar sleeve 342 including prongs 332a and 332b maintained in a parallel configuration by the trocar sleeve and the prongs can be moved apart upon emergence of the prongs from the trocar sleeve. The prongs can be spread with actuator springs 346a and 346b (Col. 11, lines 11-14). The distance between the tips of the prongs can be decreased by dragging the prongs back into the trocar sleeve. Alternatively, an active actuator, such as a tension cable assembly, can be used to spread apart the prongs. However, there is no teaching or suggestion in Wilk that left and right flexible tubes are driven apart within a predetermined angle range under operation of an actuator according to electric signals. Instead Wilk teaches manual manipulation of the trocar sleeve for driving the prongs apart and there is no teaching or suggestion in Wilk of a computer for generating electric signals to operate the actuator.

In the present invention, the left and right flexible tubes are automatically driven within a predetermined angle range via an actuator according to electric signals generated from a manipulator. In contrast, Wilk teaches manual manipulation of a bifurcated rigid support member in which prongs at each end are adjusted by a spring actuator after extending from a

trocar sleeve or a tension cable. Accordingly, Wilk does not teach automatic adjustment of the spacing between left and right cameras to allow the cameras to be automatically adjusted to take images from all directions during laparoscopic surgery. Accordingly, the present invention is not obvious in view of Wilk.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and request that all claims be allowed. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned should he believe that this would expedite prosecution of this application. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-2165.

Respectfully submitted,



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